

## Red Tide Still High

Shellfishing still remains on hold in Duxbury after samples sent out last Thursday "came up hot" for red tide, according to Harbormaster Don Beers.

On May 20, the state's Division of Marine Fisheries ordered the closure of shellfish beds from the coast of Maine to Cape Cod, due to an outbreak of red tide. A product of Mother Nature, the red tide is caused by environmental conditions such as warm surface temperatures, calm seas, persistent rain and northeasterly winds. When these conditions occur, toxic algae move to the surface of the water, contaminating shellfish and often turning the water a reddish color.

Though some oyster farmers had hoped that last week's storms would blow the toxic algae out to sea, red tide still remains in the water.

"No one knows when it's going to go away," said Beers. "We're all anxious."

Filter feeding shellfish such as oysters and soft-shell clams become contaminated when they ingest the toxic algae along with their food. Eating contaminated shellfish can be harmful to humans, but the Division of Marine Fisheries is making sure that contaminated shellfish are not being harvested.

Last week, the Harbormaster's office sent samples to the lab to test for the presence of red tide. The results, as well as the results from this week's tests, have confirmed that red tide is in Duxbury Bay. Future tests will be taken until the red tide disappears and shellfishing can resume, Beers said.

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